This book is about nonviolent direct action, a movement or perhaps more accurately a node linking a number of movements in the United States in the late 1970s and the 1980s. In each of these movements there has been a radical wing made up of people who believe in nonviolence, engage in political action through affinity groups, practice decision making by consensus, and employ the tactic of mass civil disobedience. The politics of direct action addresses a series of issues. Formulated first in the protest against nuclear power, it has spread to the peace movement, the ecology movement, the women's and gay and lesbian movements, the anti-intervention movement. The direct action wings of these movements have been loosely held together by a shared ideology that combines feminism, ecology, a form of anarchism that rests on grass roots democracy, and a leaning toward spirituality. In each of the issue-based movements in which it has appeared, nonviolent direct action has involved building community and trying to realize radically egalitarian values within the movement itself. Because direct action is as much about a particular social vision (and the practice of community building) as it is about the particular issues it has taken on, it has influenced the thinking of activists throughout the movements of the 1970s and 1980s.

I became involved in the direct action movement in 1983, after it was well under way. In June of that year I found myself in jail along with roughly a thousand other people who had blocked the road in front of the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory, the University of California's nuclear weapons research facility, about fifty
miles southeast of Oakland. The blockade had been organized by the Livermore Action Group (LAG), a San Francisco Bay Area organization with affiliated groups throughout Northern California dedicated to closing down Livermore and challenging the arms race through nonviolent direct action. I had also been among 1,300 people arrested at a previous LAG action the year before, but that time I did not go to jail; that time demonstrators were given the choice between signing police citations and receiving a fine or going to jail for a couple of nights, without further prosecution.

At the 1983 action I intended to go to jail rather than "cite out," but I expected that the experience would be similar to that of the year before and that I would be out of jail in two days at the most. This time, however, the judge decided to try to break the movement by keeping us in jail as long as possible. For the first three days no one was allowed to bail out except for medical reasons. We were then told that we could come to arraignment and receive sentences of two years' probation, restraining our participation in further civil disobedience. Most of us opted to stay in jail, holding out for eleven days, until we won an agreement that there would be no probation.

Mass jail experiences can be terrible or wonderful. Either people cannot get along with one another and agree about how to behave or what demands to make, and tensions escalate, or they work well together and an atmosphere of militant community builds. The jail experience of 1983 was of the latter sort. A spirit of solidarity emerged that sustained everyone through eleven days of uncertainty and difficult conditions: terrible food, sleep disturbed by lights and the guards' constant talk, cold nights without enough blankets. In the already overflowing Santa Rita Prison, circus tents were set up for us on the prison grounds, the women's tents by the freeway, the men's tents perhaps a quarter of a mile farther back. Because we had not yet been arraigned, we had access to telephones, a right that is lost after one has been arraigned and sentenced to a period in jail. Two banks of pay telephones, one on the women's side, one on the men's, allowed us to arrive at common strategies and to communicate with the outside world.

Anyone who planned to be arrested was required to take part in nonviolence training, a day-long workshop introducing partic-
participants to the movement's consensus decision-making process and teaching nonviolent responses to potential provocations. The workshops gave inexperienced members a short course in the movement's methods and language and a means of becoming part of an affinity group of ten to fifteen people, the movement's basic unit. Membership in an affinity group was a prerequisite for taking part in the blockade; most of the affinity groups that participated had existed for some time in this and the earlier antinuclear movement. Members of established affinity groups were already likely to know each other well; newly formed groups got to know one another quickly in jail. The affinity groups provided a context for talking issues through; they also served as a brake on disruptive impulses that might have emerged if we had gone through the jail experience as individuals rather than members of small groups of people responsible to one another.

In jail, affinity groups were organized by clusters. The clusters were not necessarily huge, because most affinity groups formed outside jail included men and women, and not everyone in a group participated in every action. Thus many groups had only a few members present in the jail. Whenever a decision had to be made (often several times a day) the clusters would meet to work out their views and arrive at consensus. Anyone who disagreed strongly with a collective decision had the right to block it, although it was understood that this power should not be used unless a fundamental moral issue was at stake. Each cluster sent a "spokes" to a "spokescouncil" that met with the clusters; runners were sent between clusters and spokescouncil, bringing questions to be addressed to the clusters and conveying the decisions to the spokescouncil. Spokes were rotated daily, so as to discourage the emergence of a leading group. But although there was no formal leadership, there was an informal group of people who were in fact looked to for leadership and who spent a good deal of time meeting among themselves and with others, trying to avoid problems and facilitate the operation of what we were coming to call the peace camp in the tents. When we were not meeting in our clusters or affinity groups, there were workshops and seminars on everything from how to fold paper cranes to the history of the Cold War. Some people spent a good deal of their time sunbathing. In the evenings, there were talent shows; on Emma Gold-
man's birthday, we held a party. First there were presentations about Emma Goldman's life and the history of anarchism, and then we danced to drum music improvised on empty aluminum storage cans.

But the authorities never left us to our own devices for very long. Twice a day the guards would round us up and herd us into one of the tents, where we would sit with our clusters in case quick decisions were needed. The sheriff would then appear at the front of the tent and announce through a bullhorn that the court was open and the judge was waiting for us to present ourselves for arraignment. Each time several women would leave the tent to board the bus for the court; our spokeswoman would then go to the front of the tent and present the refusal of the rest of us, pointing out that we had not yet been offered a satisfactory sentence. The same scene was played out simultaneously on the men's side.

The first time, as the women who had decided to leave boarded the bus, the rest of us, relieved that there were so few of them, rose and sang "Solidarity Forever." In the brief general meeting that followed, one woman expressed her dismay. To sing "Solidarity Forever" while women were leaving was, she pointed out, to exclude them from that solidarity; it was an implicit criticism of their action. A committee was formed to try to find some way of affirming our solidarity without implying that those who decided to leave were breaking it. The next day, when we were again invited to arraignment, women in pairs began to form a bridge with their outstretched arms; the bridge lengthened to include everyone who was not leaving. As the women who were leaving walked under this human bridge, the women who made up the bridge sang a song to them: "Listen, listen, listen, to our heart song, we will never forget you, we will never forsake you." Those who were part of the bridge were able to hug and kiss the departing women as they left. Only after the buses left did the rest of us sing "Solidarity Forever."

I do not believe that I had ever before seen a movement that actually went out of its way to affirm its solidarity with those who had decided to leave an action or in some other way separate themselves from the main course that the movement was taking. In the Old Left and the antiwar movement, both of which I had
been part of, pressures to conform to the prevailing line had been routine. It often seemed that a collective sense of the movement's fragility brought about a particularly relentless policing of boundaries, and that the movement became a terrain for the exercise of an authoritarianism very much like what we protested in the society at large. Especially in the late sixties and early seventies, I became accustomed to being told by self-designated left and feminist authorities where the line lay between correct and incorrect ideas and behavior. It had seemed to me that unwillingness to accept individual differences, in views and in degree of commitment, and the sense of entitlement leaders exhibited in demanding sacrifices from participants, had been reasons for that movement's disintegration. The fact that the nonviolent direct action movement was able to treat internal difference with respect made me want to learn more about it. I had known very few of the women in the tents before finding myself in jail with them: there were few academics among them, and hardly anyone from the Bay Area intellectual/left/feminist circles with which I am familiar, and which tend to lay claim to the legacy of sixties activism.

The women in jail with me ranged in age from eighteen to eighty, though a majority were in their late twenties and thirties. (There was, in addition, one sixteen-year-old who had managed to disguise her age when she was arrested; she hid in one of the privies when the authorities tried to find her in order to release her.) There were large numbers of women who worked in health care, elementary and high school teaching, social work, or therapy of various kinds. The counterculture was well represented, and there were a substantial number of women who worked in health food stores or lived in rural communes. Lesbians claimed to make up about a third of the camp; they knew their own community well enough to provide a reliable estimate of their strength. The camp also contained many older women, some of them long-time peace activists, but also women from the suburbs who had never before been involved in protest but found the issues of war and disarmament compelling enough to induce them to go to jail.

Religious differences in the camp, like the generational differences, were more complementary than divisive. There were a number of Christian affinity groups, some made up of members
of Bay Area congregations; one, involving younger women, from the radical Christian community outside the organized churches. There was also an affinity group of witches and a broader grouping of women who considered themselves Pagans. There were also many Jewish women, but we tended to be secular and, in a community that resonated with a variety of strong religious overtones, relatively silent. Feminism, pacifism, and ecology were all part of the ethos of the camp. Though there were many women who would have said, if asked, that they were in favor of socialism, anarchism provided the vocabulary for political discussion. If any one group brought all these tendencies together and set a common tone, it was the witches and the Pagans, whose rituals were open to anyone who cared to participate.

The extraordinary sense of community I witnessed in Santa Rita in 1983 was not limited to the women’s tents. The experience of a roughly equal number of men (about five hundred women and five hundred men had been arrested) confined to tents perhaps a quarter of a mile away was parallel. Like the women, the men were organized into affinity groups and clusters of affinity groups; the men also appointed rotating spokes to a spokescouncil. The same decision-making procedure was followed, with the same flurry of meetings following every invitation by the sheriff to come to court and be arraigned. The bank of telephones made it possible to pass information quickly: each side knew what was being discussed on the other side and what decisions had been made. Information was also carried by the collective of movement lawyers who spent most of their time, while we were in jail, when they were not negotiating with the court, going from one side to the other, giving us information and asking for instructions. A quieter role was played by a woman doctor, a movement sympathizer and personal friend of many among both the women and the men, who managed to get herself appointed head of the medical team for the camp. In addition to treating minor ailments (and bringing in books, warm clothing, and other such items) she conveyed messages from one side to the other.

The many channels of communication between the two camps no doubt helped to establish the sense that we were all part of one camp, but it was nevertheless remarkable how similar was the experience in the men’s and the women’s tents. Men who went
through this experience describe collective swings of mood that synchronized with those that took place on the women's side. The beginning of the second week of incarceration was a low point on both sides; pulling through it without losing many to arraignment gave both sides a sense of achievement that sustained solidarity until an agreement with the judge was arrived at. The men, like the women, were mostly white, mostly of at least middle-class background, but quite diverse in age and in culture. As on the women's side, countercultural core LAG activists coexisted easily with straighter, often older men, for many of whom this was the first arrest. As on the women's side, a "liberation school" was set up in one of the men's tents. Here the classes included one by Dan Ellsberg on U.S. national security policy. Many of the similarities between the two camps were a result of months of planning for the jail experience by a LAG collective. On both sides, there was a sizable core of people who had been through a number of mass jail experiences before: after the occupation of the Diablo Canyon nuclear plant in 1981 (under the aegis of the Abalone Alliance, the predecessor to LAG), the 1982 blockade of the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, and the blockade of the Vandenberg Air Force Base earlier in 1983. Through these experiences, a shared understanding had been constructed about how to handle the jail experience, how to organize the camp, how to confront the authorities, how to sustain morale and build solidarity so that the movement as a whole would be strengthened by the experience. In this regard the "solidarity ritual" of collectively honoring those who left the camp was an innovation of the 1983 jail experience. Designed by the women, it was quickly adopted by the men, though in a slightly altered form. The men, who were herded into a courtyard for the invitation to arraignment, stood back while those who were leaving stepped into the center. The men who were remaining clapped and cheered; some stepped into the center to embrace departing friends.

The often euphoric sense of community and solidarity was as strong on the men's side as it was on the women's. One of the women in the camp, whose husband was on the men's side, was a little taken aback when her husband told her in a telephone conversation that for the first time he felt that he had a family. Other men, recalling the experience, have described it as a high
point of the sense of community in their experience in the movement. Osha Neumann, a core LAG activist who had been involved in the planning that went into the jail experience, suggested that part of the reason it went so well was that people felt good about being in jail. "It was sort of like Thoreau," he said. "It was a feeling of, why are you on the outside, not why are we here. It was precisely the right place to be." The jail experience was a high point for the movement, Osha argued, because it provided a rare opportunity to realize the movement’s fundamental values, at least in a limited way.

The basis of LAG philosophy was an attempt to eliminate centers of power, to create a version of participation that was as complete as people could imagine; not to reproduce the errors of the earlier movement [of the sixties]. The experience confirmed some of what we believed, that people crave a certain kind of community. A community that is formed in the process of struggle is a very precious thing, and fulfills a lot of needs that are not met in daily life. That’s a great strength for a movement, something that should be nourished. On the one hand people feel part of an intentional community, with a sense of genuine participation, support, love; on the other hand, the face of power shows itself. These can be key events. What was set up was a place where each person was confronted with a decision: whether to step over the line and get arrested or not. Making that decision was an important moment in people’s lives. When people made the decision to step over the line and get arrested, they found that they also made the decision to step into a community that felt fulfilling and liberating.1

Robbie Osman, also a core LAG activist, described the jail experience as having been infused with a collective creativity and sense of humor that in ordinary circumstances finds little outlet. He recalled that often, for no apparent reason, the guards would begin herding the men from one place to another. During one such operation someone began mooing like a cow; soon everyone was mooing. "It was a way of making fun of the guards and making the situation ours that was nonhostile, nonaggressive," Robbie said.

There are some very rare times when you feel there’s a real movement, you have the sense of people being out at the limits of their creativity and cooperation. You have a sense of the opportunities of
community that have been denied us, so deeply denied that we almost forget that it's possible. Experiences like that create an incredible momentum for involving us with each other and committing ourselves to a common program. It just isn't created by analysis, even the best analysis. No analysis is enough unless you can get that chemistry going. And that was the potential that the jail experience held.²

It seemed to me that the movement that I had stumbled upon in jail was something new and vital. It presented a sharp contrast with the organized left with which I was familiar, the democratic-socialist and Marxist-Leninist organizations that remained from the movements of the sixties and that by 1983 seemed dated and all but lifeless. My sense was that LAG was beginning to construct a political language and style that was more appropriate to the issues that have become prominent in the eighties, such as nuclear war and the survival of the environment and of the human race, which so immediately involve fundamental values. The direct action movement seemed to have at least part of the answer to the question of how to break through the isolation of the left and speak to broader audiences. This persuaded me to continue to participate in the movement after I got out of jail and also to study the larger nonviolent direct action movement on which LAG was modeled.

Because it has been relatively invisible to people outside activist circles (except during mass actions, when thousands of people blockade or occupy a site and go to jail), it seems worthwhile to give a brief description of the main organizations within the direct action movement. It must be kept in mind, however, that the basic unit of the direct action movement is the affinity group. A description of the large direct action organizations, which have been centered in New England and California, leaves out all of the affinity groups in other parts of the country. Although the large organizations have held the most highly publicized actions, the movement also has included countless numbers of affinity groups, working singly or together, in other areas of the country.

The model for the structure and philosophy of the nonviolent direct action movement was the Clamshell Alliance. The Clamshell Alliance was founded in 1976 in New Hampshire after the Public Service Corporation announced its intention to go ahead
with plans to build a nuclear power plant on the New Hampshire coast, in the town of Seabrook. The people who came together to form the Clamshell Alliance (which took its name from the clams threatened by the plant) included local environmental activists who had attempted to block the construction of the plant through elections and had decided that it was time to turn to direct action, former antiwar activists who had moved to rural northern New England in the early seventies, and two women from the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) who saw the potential for a movement that would share the Quaker values of nonviolence and community. The Clamshell Alliance adopted the principle of nonviolence, agreed to make all decisions in small groups by consensus, and held a series of occupations of the Seabrook nuclear site. Many residents of Seabrook and other nearby towns were sympathetic to the Clamshell; many offered material support, and some became part of the movement themselves. But the base of the Clamshell was the radical ecological counterculture activists who had moved to the northern New England countryside when the antiwar movement waned. Clamshell actions also drew large numbers of young people from the cities, especially Boston.

After two small occupations in the summer of 1976 efforts were directed toward organizing a mass occupation, which was held in late April of the following year; roughly 24,000 people occupied the site, and 1,401, after being told to leave by Governor Thompson, remained to be arrested. Protesters were taken to seven armories throughout New Hampshire, where most remained for two weeks. The mass occupation of the site and the stay in the armories brought the Clamshell and the issue of nuclear power a great deal of publicity. In the armories, where decisions were made by consensus within and among affinity groups, and officials were forced to negotiate with a “leaderless” movement that put forward different representatives every day, a powerful spirit of community was created. After the 1977 occupation the Clamshell grew rapidly. A year later it was destroyed by a bitter internal split, but in the meantime it had trained many thousands of activists in the use of consensus process and massive nonviolent direct action, and it inspired the formation of dozens of other alliances against nuclear power and other environmental threats elsewhere in the country.
The largest of these was the Abalone Alliance, also organized in 1976, in Northern California. The target of the Abalone was the Diablo Canyon nuclear plant near San Luis Obispo on the central California coast, which Pacific Gas and Electric (PG & E) had been preparing for some time to put on-line. Mothers for Peace, a San Luis Obispo group that had formed in opposition to the war in Vietnam, had fought against the plant. Leading peace activists in Northern California, as in New England including members of the AFSC, saw nuclear power as an opportunity to build a nonviolent movement that might, in time, take on the issue of nuclear weapons, and perhaps move on to the broad aim of nonviolent revolution. The Abalone Alliance modeled itself on the Clamshell Alliance: organization based on local groups, the use of consensus decision making, and a strict adherence to nonviolence. Like the Clamshell, the Abalone brought together two constituencies: people in and near San Luis Obispo who wanted to get rid of the plant, and radical ecologically oriented activists, mostly from Northern California, many of them part of the substantial counterculture that remained from the sixties and early seventies.

Like the Clamshell, the Abalone held an escalating series of occupations at the Diablo plant. The Abalone decided to refrain from calling a massive occupation until the license to operate the plant was granted. Meanwhile public awareness of the dangers of nuclear power increased enormously after the accident at Three Mile Island, March 28, 1979. In September of 1981 the Diablo Canyon plant was licensed and the Abalone called for a massive occupation; over a two-week period, waves of protesters entered the plant site; in all there were more than 1,900 arrests. On the day that the occupation was ended, a PG & E engineer announced that he had found a crucial error in the plant's blueprints, requiring that the plant be closed down indefinitely for major repairs. Protesters believed that the questions they raised about nuclear power might have encouraged the engineer to check the blueprints, and that the occupation created an atmosphere in which he could make such an announcement. Whether or not this was true, the occupation of Diablo helped turn public opinion against nuclear power. It also created a small army of activists trained in the philosophy and process of nonviolent direct action.
The Abalone had avoided the internal battles that had torn the Clamshell apart, because the Abalone was in California, where movement activists in general are less eager to join internal ideological battles than their counterparts on the East Coast. Abalone members also watched what happened to the Clamshell and tried to build greater flexibility into their own organization. By the early eighties, the nuclear industry was clearly in decline, partly because protest had been effective, partly because of its own technical and economic difficulties. Activists began to turn to other issues, and the Abalone, while formally remaining in existence, ceased to be a center of political activity. Some affinity groups disbanded; others turned to new issues, disarmament in particular.

The next major focus of the direct action movement was nuclear weapons. While Diablo protesters were in jail, those interested in applying the philosophy and tactics of nonviolent direct action to the Livermore Laboratory were invited to sign a list. The result of this effort was the Livermore Action Group (LAG), which had its office in Berkeley and was strongest in the Bay Area, but inherited affinity groups from all over California that had participated in the Abalone Alliance. LAG quickly became the militant cutting edge of the disarmament movement in the Bay Area, holding a series of blockades of the Livermore Laboratory that drew large numbers of people and considerable media attention. LAG attracted a more diverse constituency than the Abalone (or for that matter the Clamshell). Especially in the context of the Reagan administration’s belligerent anti-Soviet rhetoric, the arms race drove many people to protest who had never done so before. Many religious people, and many middle-aged, middle-class people, especially women, saw civil disobedience as the only effective way to register their opinions. Though the radical counterculture was the source of most of LAG’s day-to-day activists, mass actions included large numbers of older and more established people, some of whom maintained their affinity groups outside jail and continued to participate in LAG activities and in the peace movement more broadly.

From the formation of the Clamshell on, the direct action movement has identified strongly with feminism. The terms “consensus” and “feminist process” have been generally used interchangeably; the movement has seen itself as developing a fem-
inist way of doing politics. At the same time that the movement was turning toward the issue of peace, lesbians were entering the movement in large numbers (the timing having to do with the fact that the lesbian community was secure enough for lesbians to feel comfortable entering mixed movements). Many women, lesbian and straight, believed that the basis for a women’s peace movement existed. The feminist orientation of the direct action movement as a whole was strengthened by the appearance of a specifically feminist wing of the movement around the issue of disarmament, through the organization of a number of women’s peace actions and peace camps. In LAG, a women’s caucus was organized that held its own actions.

After several years of protests that were very effective in raising public awareness around the arms race, LAG declined in much the same way that the Abalone had before it; affinity groups disbanded or turned their attention to new issues. The extreme bellicosity of the Reagan administration toward the Soviet Union met so much public opposition, in the United States and Western Europe, that it had been forced to back down at least to some degree. By Reagan’s second term in office the focus of his international efforts was the assertion of U.S. power in the Third World, especially in Central America. Anti-intervention became the emphasis of the direct action movement. Affinity groups that had come together in LAG now concentrated on protesting aid to the Contras and arms shipments to El Salvador. The religious community (mostly Christian denominations, with some religious Jews) played a particularly prominent role in nonviolent direct action against intervention—the Christians largely because of their identification with liberation theology and the Jews because of parallels with the Holocaust. The direct action wing of the anti-intervention movement has not revolved around any one organization, but Pledge of Resistance and Witness for Peace, both “faith-based,” have been important centers for nonviolent civil disobedience, and both have employed consensus process.

The Clamshell, the Abalone, LAG, and other direct action organizations have each been part of two distinct movements (or perhaps more accurately, two distinct arenas within the movement for social change). Each has been part of the nonviolent direct action movement, which includes all these groups and more.
Each has also been a center of radical politics in an issue-oriented movement that includes organizations with a variety of methods and perspectives. In each of these issue-oriented movements, the direct action element is smaller than the more conventional, electorally oriented element. In the environmental movement as a whole, mainstream organizations such as the Sierra Club have played a larger role in discouraging the further development of nuclear power than the Clamshell and the Abalone. The Nuclear Freeze did more than LAG (and other direct action groups) to shift the Reagan administration away from its confrontational stance toward the Soviet Union. By taking a more militant approach than other organizations, direct action groups have provided a cutting edge. Mass civil disobedience has drawn public attention to the dangers of nuclear power, the arms race, and other issues and inspired others to take some action themselves, even if it does not involve the same level of risk.

This book is not a study of the nonviolent direct action movement as a whole, but of a relatively tightly linked set of organizations within a larger field, one that stretches back in time as well as includes groups contemporaneous with those examined here. Since the 1930s at least the American peace movement has included groups that were pacifist in philosophy and willing to risk arrest on behalf of their beliefs. In the late forties and fifties radical pacifism was a major part of the peace movement, but that movement as a whole was quite small. The early civil rights movement (which had important links to the radical pacifist movement, and was also influenced by Gandhian nonviolence) was the first example, in the United States, of a mass movement committed to nonviolent direct action. The civil rights movement was a major source of inspiration for the organizations that I have looked at.

The civil rights movement also inspired the growing peace and student movements of the late fifties and early sixties, and helped to bring ideas of nonviolent direct action to the early New Left. As the relatively gentle early New Left turned into a larger and angrier antiwar movement, nonviolent direct action was largely supplanted by more strident approaches but never entirely lost. It was maintained by the pacifist wing of the movement, especially by Quakers and other radical Christians. In the early 1970s
the influence of nonviolent direct action grew: the massive May Day blockade of the Pentagon in 1971 largely came out of the efforts of the nonviolent movement and followed its precepts. On the West Coast, the Institute for the Study of Nonviolence in Palo Alto provided support for mass actions employing nonviolent direct action against the war in a number of cities. Nonviolence was not restricted to white middle-class activists. The largely Chicano United Farm Workers adhered to the philosophy of nonviolence in its campaign for farm workers' rights, employing direct action along with other tactics.

The direct action organizations at which I have looked emerged when interest in nonviolence was growing in some sectors of the broader movement for social change. These organizations brought nonviolent direct action to issues of nuclear energy, nuclear arms, and U.S. intervention in the Third World, making this philosophy and method the basis for mass actions, for organizations that at times took on mass proportions, and for the creation of a political culture that has had wide-ranging influence. The direct action movement's approach to politics has been fresh and appealing, in contrast to a certain staleness elsewhere on the left, and has enabled the movement to draw upon constituencies that have been leery of more traditional left politics. Mass civil disobedience has given a voice to those who despaired of making themselves heard through conventional channels. The movement has drawn on what is evidently a widely felt desire to create community and collectively to affirm values of nonviolence and equality, which, in the late twentieth century, have often been in short supply.

I wrote this book partly to persuade activists who espouse a more conventional style of protest that the direct action movement should be taken seriously and that there are lessons to be learned from it. The leaders of electorally oriented organizations for social change have tended to see direct action groups as unwelcome competition. In the mass membership organizations of the peace movement, for instance, although ideas of consensus and nonviolent direct action pervaded local groups, national leadership often regarded these as incorrect views that must be fought. But the ideas of the direct action movement have spread through the activist bases of the social movements of the eighties and have profoundly affected the thinking of a new generation